

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01  
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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9975  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS MONTREAL 0217

E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: ECON, CA  
SUBJECT: MONTREAL DEPARTMENT STORE CLOSES

1. DUPUIS FRERES, THE DEPARTMENT STORE WHICH HAS BEEN IN MONTREAL FOR 109 YEARS, FOLDED FRIDAY, AS NEITHER THE BANKS NOR THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WERE ABLE TO FIND INVESTORS WILLING TO PUT UP CAPITAL TO KEEP DUPUIS OPERATING. SOME 700 WORKERS WERE LEFT WITHOUT JOBS AS RESULT OF CLOSING, WHICH ALSO REPRESENTS SET BACK TO GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP EASTERN FRANCOPHONE SECTION OF DOWNTOWN MONTREAL.

2. PRESS REPORTS TODAY, HOWEVER, THAT A GROUP OF SEVEN QUEBEC BUSINESSMEN HAS OFFERED TO TAKE OVER STORE AND TO INVEST ABOUT DOLS 1 MILLION IF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WILL MATCH THEIR INVESTMENT. SPOKESMAN FOR GROUP SAID THAT IT WAS A MATTER OF NATIONAL PRIDE FOR FRENCH-CANADIANS TO MAINTAIN DUPUIS FRERES. GROUP WILL MEET WITH FINANCE MINISTER JACQUES PARIZEAU LATER THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS OFFER. CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS (CNTU), WHICH REPRESENTS 450 OF DUPUIS' EMPLOYEES, IS ALSO CONTINUING TO PRESSURE GOVERNMENT FOR SOME ACTION AND REPORTEDLY WILL ANNOUNCE SHORTLY ITS OWN PROGRAM FOR REFLOATING DUPUIS. ANOTHER PLAN, WHICH HAS BEEN PROPOSED BY FORMER PRESIDENT OF DUPUIS, IS TO  
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TURN PART OF MAIN DUPUIS BUILDING INTO A SHOPPING CENTER HOUSING A NUMBER OF BOUTIQUES.

3. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY HAS BETTER USES FOR ITS MONEY THAN TO ATTEMPT TO PROP UP DUPUIS FRERES. WHILE PARIZEAU HAS KEPT A TIGHT REIN ON EXPENDITURES, THERE ARE APPARENTLY SOME WHO THINK APPEALS TO FRENCH-CANADIAN NATIONALISM MAY LOOSEN HIS

PURSESTRINGS. REFERENCE WILL PROBABLY ALSO BE MADE TO GOVERNMENT'S EXPERIENCE WITH TRICOFIL, A TEXTILE PLANT WHICH WAS SAVED FROM CLOSING IN 1974 BY GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS AND WHICH WORKERS NOW CONTROL AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF LOSING MONEY, TRICOFIL MAY BE ON POINT OF BECOMING PROFITABLE, ACCORDING TO STATEMENTS OF COMPANY'S DIRECTORS TO MONTREAL STAR.  
HARPER

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## Message Attributes

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